

2x6 THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

⁴⁴ She does not remember my short frocks at all, Lord Henry. But I remember her very well at Vienna thirty years ago, and how *decotletee* she was then."

"She is still *dicoUetee*" he answered, taking an olive in his long fingers; "and when she is in a very smart gown she looks like an *^edition de luxe* of a bad French novel. She is really wonderful, and full of surprises. Her capacity for affection is extraordinary. When her third husband died, her hair turned quite gold from grief."

"Kow can you, Harry!" cried Dorian.

"It is a most romantic explanation/" laughed the hostess. "But her third husband, Lord Henry 1 You don't mean to say Ferrol is the fourth."

"Certainly, Lady Narborough."

"I don't believe a word of it."

"Well, ask Mr. Gray. He is one of her most intimate friends."

"Is it true, Mr. Gray ? "

"She assures me so, Lady Narborough," said Dorian.

"I asked her whether, like Marguerite de Navarre, she had their hearts embalmed and hung at her girdle. She told me she didn't. because none of them had had any hearts at all."

"Four husbands! Upon my word that is *trap de zele*"

"*Trop tfattdace*, I tell her," said Dorian.

"Oh! she is audacious enough for anything, my dear. And what is Ferrol like? I don't know him."

"The husbands of very beautiful women belong to the criminal classes," said Lord Henry, sipping his wine.

Lady Narborough hit him with her fan.

"Lord Henry, I am not at all surprised that the world says that you are extremely wicked."

"But what world says that?" asked Lord Henry, elevating his eyebrows. "It can only be the next world. This world and I are on excellent terms."

"Everybody I know says you are very wicked," cried the old lady, shaking her head.

Lord Henry looked serious for some moments.

"It is perfectly monstrous," he said, at last, "the way people go about nowadays saying things against one behind one's back that are absolutely and entirely true."

"Isn't he incomible?" cried Dorian, leaning forward in

I hope so," said his hostess, laughing.

"But really if you